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PRESERVATION OR ASSIMILATION?

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A SERMON ON REFORM

Preached at the Park Synagogue on the
Second Day of Passover, 1917.

BY

Chief Rabbi Dr. J. L. LANDAU.

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Published by the United Hebrew Congregation.

Johannesburg, 1917.

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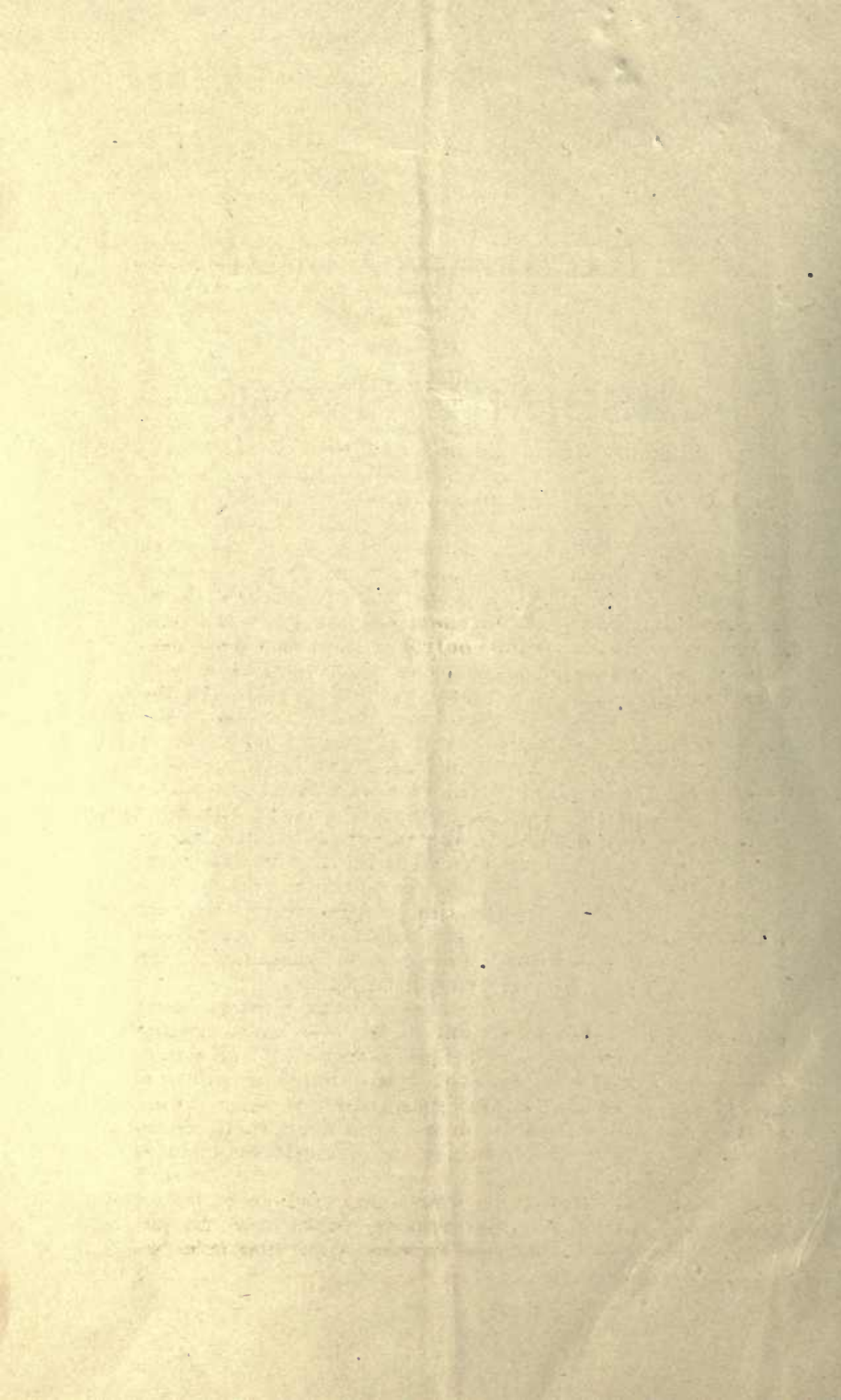
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“Lo, the winter is past, the rain is over, the flowers appear on the earth, the time of pruning is come, and the voice of the turtle-dove is heard in our land.” (Song of Songs ii.).*

In my sermon yesterday morning I dealt with the hopeful political position of our people in the near future. The sudden political upheaval in Russia will radically change the plans and prospects of the Jews; not only in that country, but throughout the world. The tremors of an earthquake, caused by a violent volcanic eruption, are as a rule felt many thousands of miles away from the affected centre. The nations are becoming more and more conscious of their dormant powers and overwhelming moral duties, and are therefore more insistent in their demands for a greater and more decisive share in the control of their own destinies. And at the moment the shackles of slavery have been definitely broken by them, at the moment the barriers of class-distinctions have been lowered, the voice of liberty and justice will become so powerful as to drown the shrill shriek of racial and religious prejudice, and the position of the Jew will then necessarily improve, as it has already improved in civilised countries like Great Britain and the two great Republics.

We may therefore hope, that the Rabbinical interpretation of our text will now be borne out by the recent political events. “The time of pruning has arrived for the iniquitous power of tyrants to be destroyed, for the stern rule of brutal force to be vanquished, for the Jews to be at last redeemed from slavery.”

Russia, the home of many millions of Jews, and, therefore, the most important of all the lands of our Goluth, has now set a glorious example of self-assertion, and we may hope that the Jewish question will now also be happily solved in that great country. The genius of the Jew will ultimately burst open even those doors which autocracy and hyprocrisy had hitherto kept close-

(*) כי הנה הסתו עבר, וזו מלכות בוחים שמסיתה את העולם, הגשם הלך לך, זה השעבוד, עת הזמיר הגיע—הגיע זמנם של ישראל להגאל, של מלכות בוחים שתכלה, של מלכות שמים שתגלה, א"י שתחלק לישראל.

(שהש"ר)

ly barred against it. The political clock seems to be striking the hour of our social redemption.

Imagine, if you can, the enormous consequences of the Russian revolution! Millions of people who had been treated as outlaws, almost as criminals, may now take their places on a plane of absolute equality with their fellow-citizens; they may have their children educated and claim protection under the wings of the law. They need no longer flee in the dead of night to save their lives; they need no longer knock at the gates of distant lands to be admitted as vagrant beggars, to live on sufferance. Their more fortunate, more privileged, brethren need no longer fear the influx of the homeless aliens because of possible political or social complications. Indeed, we are at the present moment so stunned by the horrors of this dreadful war, that we are unable to realize the immense importance of this new wondrous deed of Providence; that we are unable to hear the sweet warbling of the turtle-dove which heralds the approach of a new spring in our history.

But what about the future of Judaism? May we also hope that the ancient glory of our people, the glory of our spiritual destiny, of our great national mission, will simultaneously reveal itself with renewed splendour and vigour?

From history we learn that whenever Jews enjoyed success and prosperity, whenever they enjoyed the friendship of their neighbours and were allowed to join in their various pursuits, they rapidly drifted from their time-honoured traditions, they viciously tried to efface all those religious and racial characteristics which partly embarrassed them, partly impeded their headlong race for social distinctions and material gain. The old reproach of Moses unfortunately proved ever true. "But Jeshurun waxed fat and kicked." This was true of King Solomon, who, notwithstanding his great wisdom, married an Egyptian princess, and notwithstanding the glory of the First Temple, which he himself had reared, allowed the goddess of the Zidonians and the abomination of the Ammonites to beguile his heart and to contaminate the life of his people. This was true of the Alexandrian Community before the destruction of the Second Temple, when an eminent writer and thinker like Philo was almost ignorant of the original language of the Bible. More especially was this true of the Jewish Communities of the last, the 19th century, which prospered in European civilised countries. The gates of the German Ghetto had scarcely been opened when thous-

ands of our brethren and sisters forced their way out into the broad daylight, never to return to the ranks of their people and to the God of their fathers. Under the benevolent reign of Alexander II., who encouraged the secular education of his Jewish subjects, and allowed them to settle outside the Pale, assimilation among them was most rampant.

Dr. Herzl was thus not altogether wrong when he maintained, that the Jews had been kept together by one common enemy; that the whole national movement known as Zionism was mainly due to the growing vehemence of anti-Semitism! And indeed, no one can deny that Dr. Leo Pinsker wrote his famous pamphlet: "Auto emancipation" after the Russian Pogroms, and Herzl his "Judenstaat" in consequence of the Dreyfus Affair.

The question thus forces itself upon us: "What will be the fate of Judaism if this war brings about the realisation of our hopes and the fulfilment of our prayers: the emancipation of our people in Russia and in other similar countries?"

* * * *

"The reform of our religion must go hand in hand with that of our politics. New birds, new songs. Changed times demand a change in our conceptions of our religious duties; in the practice of our religious rites," is the emphatic reply which I receive from many quarters.

Reform? Is there any definite meaning that can be attached to that term? An English philosopher once remarked, that the contentions existing between men mostly arise from confusion of thought, caused by different definitions attached to one and the same word. We all agree that progress is the truest manifestation of life. Organic beings which are at a standstill must decay. And systems of thought like organic beings continually change their form in the process of their progressive development. But change of form does not imply a change of character, it does not affect the essence of one's being. To reform does not mean to transform.

No modern, educated Jew, is prepared to sacrifice the advantages of European, or so called European, culture. Neither is there any necessity for us to make such a sacrifice. Our civilised non-Jewish friends will, even more readily than some of our liberal Jews, admit, that one need not sacrifice one's religious traditions in order to participate in the cultivation and in the blessings of science and art. Some of our strict orthodox Rab-

his were eminent scientists and renowned philosophers. But what have been the achievements of the Reform Movement?

It is just a century since Israel Jacobson, the son-in-law of a wealthy court-Jew of Brunswick, ventured to "undertake some sort of reform." By his wealth, intelligence, position, and influence, eminently fitted for that great task, he, after having failed in his efforts in Seesen, introduced his innovations into the great Jewish Community of the Prussian Capital. He held the first divine services in accordance with the tendencies of modern liberal Judaism, at his own residence. The first service was attended by his rich, cultured, and distinguished friends, who came to witness the first Jewish Confirmation. Jacobson, who occupied the pulpit, confirmed his own son. And so effective and impressive was that ceremony, that that young gifted child—became a Roman Catholic priest. He, the son, was consistent and deeply deplored his father's inconsistency: his lack of courage to admit the whole truth.

His friends did.

But the rapid results, the unfortunate results, of those successful services had the opposite effect on learned Jews like Leopold Zunz. That eminent savant suddenly turned round and became an orthodox Jew, and openly condemned the Synagogue whose first salaried and most distinguished Minister he had been.

And what has been the result of the reform movement in France? Let us hear the evidence of an impartial, unprejudiced eye-witness, of an acknowledged and highly respected critic, who, until recently, himself ignored both Jews and Judaism. Let us hear Max Nordau, who lived in Paris for over thirty years and whose statements must be unimpeachable.

"If French Judaism, he wrote in an open letter, had not been assured by an extensive immigration, it would not be in existence at the present moment. Of the descendants of the French members of the Napoleonic Synhedrion not half are now Jews, and even those who have not abjured Judaism have many Christians in their families. There is not a single Jewish house of more than half a century's standing, which has not become related by marriage to Christians. Yet another generation and not one of those old families of French Jews will any longer adhere to Judaism."

And the French Jews have made their divine services most attractive. They have magnificent Temples, well-trained mixed choirs, and other excellent modern

arrangements, all calculated to attract the worshipper, to impress him, with the result just mentioned. "A time there was," writes a prominent leader of the American Reform movement, "when the scapegoat was quick at hand whereon to cast the blame for the religious indifference among the young generation. The services, it was charged, were conducted in a language that was unintelligible, and there was nothing inspiring about them. The services were held on a day upon which it was impossible for them to attend." "If you want to keep the young and rising generation moored to the ancestral faith, you must give them an intelligent and intelligible religion, a religion which they can understand." Well; laments the same writer, "everything that could be done has been done to modernise the services and to make them 'attractive.'" Sunday services have been introduced in some Synagogues, and Friday evening services, costly choirs, congregational singing, elimination of much of the Hebrew, pre-confirmation classes, confirmation classes, post-confirmation classes, libraries, current topics classes, . . . Nothing has been left untried." And with what result? "Apathy is still prevalent, and indifference broods over the cause of Israel. . . . like a dark night." "The attendance at most of these services is nothing to be proud of. It seems that the Jew is too prosperous to give a thought to his religion. He is too free."

This confession of a man, whose task and mission it is to spread and to inculcate the principles of Reform or Liberal Judaism, speaks volumes and needs no further comment.

And do you seriously hope to succeed where those men have failed? Among them are millionaires, philanthropists; millionaires to whom the Parnassim need not go hat in hand for material support to be ignominiously refused; millionaires whose wives and daughters are still Jewesses; millionaires like Rothschilds and Schiffs, men of renown throughout the Jewish world, who still cling to their Judaism and are earnestly anxious to lend their respective Congregations every moral and material support. They have richly endowed educational institutions to assist them in all their praiseworthy efforts to save the rising generation, to spread among them Jewish knowledge. They possess Rabbinical Seminaries, Gymnasias, and admirable libraries, fountains of information on any and every Jewish subject. They have reared magnificent Synagogues, which would not pale beside an Herodian Temple; they have equipped them with or-

gans and choirs. And, last but not least, among them there are Jewish scholars of world-wide fame; men whose presence alone, apart from their kindling orations and scholarly activities, ought to inspire Jewish young men and women with respect and reverence for the ideals of Judaism.

And yet, they have deplorably failed.

What have we here to justify the assertion, that we would be more successful, that our feeble efforts and frail means would enable us to achieve better and more lasting results?

* * * *

I readily admit that we need radical reforms in order to save our children from the destructive evils of irreligion and religious indifference, which are sapping the very foundations of our Community. We must, and indeed very soon, introduce some reforms to stem the tide which is sweeping from our midst some of our best young men and women.

I had hoped that after the war a new stream of Jewish immigrants from Russia, Galicia, and other Jewish centres, would wend its way to this sub-Continent and assure the future of Judaism here as it had done before in France, England, and in the United States of America. But if the new democratic Regime in Russia remains in power, as we all hope and pray it may, South Africa will not so soon be visited by large numbers of European immigrants; such as we would gladly receive. It is for the Jews of this country to work out their own salvation, to arouse and to bring into play their own vital forces, which may be only dormant.

Let us introduce the most necessary reforms. Let us in the first place reform **OUR HOMES**.

All teachers of religion, all psychologists and pedagogues, agree, that home life, home influence, is the very foundation upon which a child's character must be built up; that it is eminently the home-soil which supplies us with the vital sap of our moral vigour. Home is the cradle of every nation. "No nation can be destroyed while it possesses a good home life." This morning we read in the Portion of our Torah: "And it shall come to pass that your children will ask you: 'What is the meaning of this (Passover) service? And ye shall say: It is the sacrifice of the Lord's Pessach, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when he smote Egypt, and saved our homes.'" (Ex. XII., 26-27). **ואת בתינו הציל.**

This miracle of our God was even more manifested in our national life during the middle-ages. For nearly two thousand years we have been homeless, from a political point of view. We have lived in hostile lands as aliens, as pariahs. Even in the first half of the last century our fathers were not allowed to hold divine services, to build Synagogues in a city's thoroughfares. The Chadorim, the Hebrew Schools, it must frankly be admitted, were scarcely ideals of educational institutions. Their deplorable conditions can to-day be explained but hardly excused. And throughout those dark ages the Jew could call nothing his own—except his home. But the home proved the strongest bulwark of his religion, of his morals and his intellectual acquisitions. This has been admitted even by our most prejudiced enemies. The Jew of the Chetto, whatever was his position, could always speak with a feeling of pride and happiness in the words of the Psalmist:

אתהלך בתם לבני בקרב ביתי.

"I live with perfect sincerity within my house." (Cl., 2). And his most fervent prayer has ever been "Do not cut off Thy kindness from my home for ever." (1 Sam. XX. 15). ולא תכרית את חסדך מעם ביתי עד עולם.

Is our home still the same? May we still hope that the example set to the child in our homes will fill his or her heart with religious fervour? Can we for a moment earnestly believe, that the present Jewish home in this country will be the cradle of a future religious, vigorous, generation, willing to make any sacrifice for its ancient traditions?

The Jewish home to-day acts in direct opposition to those traditions; to the Religion Classes, where those traditions are being taught; to the Synagogue, where they are practised, proclaimed and acclaimed; in opposition to your spiritual leaders who continually endeavour to promote and to glorify the doctrines and the principles of our Torah. The home frustrates their intentions, paralyzes their efforts, and undermines their influence. And can you honestly believe that a mixed choir, that two or three prayers in the vernacular, would be able to undo the undoubtedly enormous harm wrought daily by the de-Judaized home?

Let us introduce further reforms. Let us reform the *education of our children*.

I would never approve of a system calculated to thwart the secular education of the modern child. It

must be fully equipped for the battle of life, for the struggle for its existence, and capable of coping with the great problems of its age. But it need not, for that reason, be entrusted to the guidance of non-Jewish Institutions and exposed to anti-Jewish influences. Do you for a moment seriously believe, that children living altogether among zealous adherents of another religion, sharing not only their food, but the very breath of their physical and moral life, would be brought back to the ranks of our people by the performances of a mixed choir? And, need I add, by performances which, as a rule, are neither inspiring nor even sincere?

How often in the Jewish year, is that child privileged to enter the Synagogue and to enjoy a choral service?

Let us reform our *Synagogues*.

Even in former years, when a spirit of religious solemnity used to permeate the Jewish home, the life of the Jew was bound up with the Synagogue. He rejoiced when it was said unto him: "Let us go into the house of the Lord." The Rabbis, therefore, commenting on a verse in the Song of Songs, justly remarked: "Though I am politically asleep in the lands of the Goluth, my heart is wide awake in the Synagogue and in the house of learning." Wherever ten Jews settled they established a Congregation and reared a Synagogue. And the larger their numbers grew in the course of time, the more important became the mission of the Synagogue as a centre of their religious thoughts and activities, because as a rule they were scattered fugitives hailing from various countries.

To-day our homes become more and more alienated from Judaism, and the Synagogue is the only religious shrine that embraces all our religious traditions and keeps them alive. Let then this Institution receive and retain the respect, the attention and whole-hearted support of the Community. You demand more prayers and short addresses in English? By all means have them. But do not introduce such reforms for the inmates of the Aged Home, or for similar people, who, during the greater part of the year, are the only regular attendants, who turn from such innovations with a feeling of horror. You yourselves come to Synagogue, at least on important Sabbaths and Festivals. Let your children learn from your example to respect this only link that still binds us to our ancient faith.

I am for reforms, but reforms that lead back to Judaism, not away from it; that help to preserve our

traditions, not to discard them. The redemption of the Jewish people in certain countries now depends upon the good will of leading statesmen, the redemption of Judaism depends entirely upon our own earnest and determined efforts.

"The time of Zomir is come." Not only the time of pruning, but also the time of singing has arrived. But let us sing not only the praises of assimilation, of political emancipation, of material welfare, of social liberties, but also the praises of Judaism, the song of our moral and spiritual resurrection. The time is come for the spirit of God to reveal itself again in our homes, in our private and public life. "The time has arrived for Eretz Yisrael to be divided among us." True, we cannot all hope to enjoy the happiness of dwelling under Palestinian vine, fig, and palm trees, but we can cause the spirit of the Holy Land to pervade our homes and synagogues, to permeate our souls, that we may justly and proudly take our places among the nations as children of ancient Israel, as children blessed of the Lord, that we may justly and loudly exclaim in our Synagogues: "The time of song is come." "The Lord is my strength and song"! Amen.



“ And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked and behold, there stood a man against him with his sword drawn in his hand, and Joshua said unto him, Art thou for us, or for our adversaries? ” (Joshua v. 13). *

My dear congregants,—The great national significance of this festive day would justify me in again discussing some solemn and subtle idea that arises out of this Festival. One feels actually tempted to deliver an oration impressive by the depth and sublimity of its thoughts. But in consideration of the fact that I have not often an opportunity of addressing you in such large numbers, and that many burning questions of vital Communal importance demand serious discussion and, if possible, a final solution, I suppress the temptation. I say, this is no time for philosophical discourses, and I propose to devote my remarks this morning to one of those serious problems.

Karl Gutzkow, a German poet, has dramatised the famous conflict that had taken place during the first half of the seventeenth century between Uriel Acosta and the rabbis of Amsterdam. In a remarkable and memorable scene we see Acosta standing before the rabbis and the leading members of the Jewish Community, who had assembled to excommunicate the heretic. The Shamoshim of the Synagogue ready for action, already press the Shoforoht to their lips to proclaim the great ban, when a young man suddenly intervenes: “Rabbis, Acosta is a Christian, and you have no jurisdiction over the children of the Church.” Acosta, however, passionately repudiates that statement. “That is malicious calumny,” he exclaims. “I am not a Christian, I am a Jew!” “If that be so,” then says one of the rabbis, “let the trumpets sound, and announce to the Jewish Community at large, that Uriel Acosta is a Jew no longer.”

A similar conflict is now taking place in the Jewish world, and those words of the rabbi unfortunately apply not only to single individuals, but to whole large Congregations. The public mind has during the last few months been deeply stirred by the new Reform Move-

* Sermon preached on the same subject at the Park Synagogue on the first day of Passover, 1910, and published here by request.

ment which has been inaugurated in London by one or two influential Jews. The principal tendencies of that movement are not new. They are older than some here imagine. In the Friday Night lectures which I delivered here from this same place about two years ago, I tried to prove that these very ideas agitated some sections of the Jewish Community during the first century and gave rise to Judeo-Christianity. The attacks of those half-Jews before the destruction of the Temple, were also directed against the Sabbath, the Festivals, the dietary laws and against the Temple itself; against the most sacred religious and national traditions of the people. I need not point out to you the disastrous results of that movement. If our modern Judeo-Christians would openly admit their true intentions, there would be no room for the question: "Art thou for us or for our adversaries?" But as those London gentlemen and their American friends, would make us believe that they still are good Jews, earnestly concerned in the future of Judaism, that they advise us to abolish our ancient and sacred institutions in order to save and to keep alive a remnant of our people, we too, like that rabbi in Gutzkow's drama, must solemnly announce, that in our opinion, they are Jews no longer.

My dear friends, I am grieved to say, that some of their arguments possess the convincing force of fact. It cannot be denied that the Sabbath is being profaned all along the line. Not only in this country, but even in old revered Jewish Communities, like Cracow, Lemberg, Prague, Wilna and others, the sanctity of the Seventh Day is openly and fearlessly violated. It is equally true, that the Synagogues are comparatively empty during the greater part of the year. I also unhesitatingly admit, that the Service in our Synagogues is under the present conditions not calculated to impress the worshippers. The Hebrew language is not understood by the majority of the Congregation, especially by the younger generation. The prayers are to them meaningless sounds which lack the force of religious impressiveness. Many of the prayers also express wishes and hopes which do not appeal to their modern views of life.

But the question arises, will all radical reforms, as conceived by those American rabbis and by the author of "Liberal Judaism," bring about a regeneration of Judaism, reawaken and rekindle religious feelings? Will they deepen our religious convictions and induce the faithless of our people to become faithful to the Synagogue, to the ancient Jewish faith? Maybe that some

of those reformers honestly and sincerely believe in their effectiveness. Mr. Montefiore perhaps believes in the ultimate success of his un-Jewish efforts. But I cannot yield to his arguments. I cannot close my eyes to both historical facts and psychological reasons. Both prove most conclusively and convincingly that all those efforts are doomed to failure.

We need not go back thousands of years and consult times far-removed from our present conditions of life. American reform and the parent movement in Germany have been in force for more than half a century. What good have they produced? Where are the religious Congregations which owe their existence to those reform influences? As regards the national element of Judaism, it is well-known that the Reform-Jew denies his nation, opposes Zionism not because of its political aspirations, but because of its national hopes. Jerusalem, Zion, and all similar words that refer to the Jewish past and arouse hopes for a national resurrection have been eliminated from the Prayer Book. Hebrew has been rejected for one reason only, because it is the only national remnant of a glorious past. And as to religion, will they make you earnestly believe in their religious sincerity? Do their Sunday Services and their repeated references to the New Testament, to the prophetic gifts of the founder of the Church, bear the stamp of our Jewish religion, and are they calculated to strengthen the ties which still link together the millions of our brethren scattered throughout the world? Has not Montefiore himself publicly stated, that an English non-Jew was dearer to his heart than a Russian Jew?

We are again and again told that out of a Community of nearly a million Jews, crowded together within one square mile, as many as three thousand attend a Sunday morning service. This is only natural. The Sermons are not quite Jewish nor are the preachers quite rabbis. Those thousands of young Jews and Jewesses have also just come from Russia, and brought with them all that idealism which inspires our young Russian brethren. But will those thousands who fill the Reform Synagogues or places of assembly also remain within the fold? It is a well-known fact that the third and often also the second generation of those reformers, including the rabbis, forsake Judaism. A certain Berlin Professor, the son of a Rabbi, has not yet embraced Christianity, he is still one of the prominent leading Jews of Berlin. But he has done more harm to the cause of Judaism, and has helped to undermine the authority

of the Synagogue, more than many a German anti-Semite. And his father was an eminent representative of the Reform Synagogue.

We are told that the mere fact that those people demand reforms must prove the seriousness of their wish to remain within the synagogue. It reminds me of a little story which I read some time ago. A well-known composer, when attending the first rehearsal of one of his symphonies, noticed that the flute was too loud and thus weakened the impression he wished to produce. "Pray, play more softly," he asked the flautist. The man obeyed, he played very softly, but the master still shook his head, the flute still disturbed the whole harmony of the movement and jarred on his sensitive ear. "Pray, play more softly still," he insisted. And the flautist, when he saw that he failed in his effort, that even his pianissimo could not satisfy the master, stopped playing altogether. Then the composer turned to him radiant with joy: "Flautist, this time you have done well." The orthodox rabbis are like that poor flautist. We too are asked to play softly and more softly. The religion must be made more convenient, the prayers more pleasant and the sermons more amusing. They are dreadfully serious. But do you think that the rabbis will ever be able to please and to satisfy those evergrowing demands? Is it at all possible to arrange a law or a religion so as never to be inconvenient? The reform party will not be satisfied until the small, still voice of the Jewish religion will have been altogether silenced. The slightest remnant of the religion will continue to disturb the harmony of their thoughts, of their home and public life, for they, like Acosta, are no longer Jews.

How softly do you wish me to play? So softly as to make your children believe that you do not violate our dietary laws? That such laws do not exist? Will you then be satisfied? No. I must play more softly still. I must not tell your children that the Sabbath is holy. I must not tell them that card-tables and Empire performances on Friday nights do not promote our religious feelings. I must not disturb the sacred harmony of home life, that harmony which should exist between parents and children. Will you then at last be satisfied? No, certainly not. I must not disturb the harmony of two young souls that find each other in the sacred precincts of love. Mixed marriages should, according to the reform movement, be solemnised by the Rabbi in his Synagogue. And indeed, Holdheim did. He was a

wonderful flautist. Will the harmony then be perfectly established? Not yet. Ludwig Geiger says, and he should know, that Jewish children should for the sake of peace, celebrate the Christian festivals of their school-fellows. The sacred harmony of loyalty and patriotism must not be disturbed. Can you now tell me when those demands will cease?

My dear congregants, the root of the evil lies not in the Prayer-book nor in the religious ceremonies, but in ourselves. We lack religious convictions, religious inspiration, love of our Jewish traditions and knowledge of our Jewish past. Those who love their people truly, with all the purity and sincerity of their hearts will not mind certain prayers which do not appeal to their modern thought. They will not deny their ancestors because some rites are sometimes very inconvenient. "Love covers all defects." You argue that the Law has become burdensome, intolerable. How is it that the Psalmist in his pure divine ecstasy exclaimed: "Had it not been for Thy Law, the source of my moral pleasure, I should have perished in my affliction." How can a burden become the source of one's delight and moral gratification? How is it that while some of our brethren to-day find it so difficult or inconvenient to eat Matza, or to commemorate some ancient traditions, prominent, highly educated and leading Marranos in Spain hid themselves in subterranean vaults to eat Matza or to observe some other important Mitzvah of their people? They did it at the risk of their lives. They knew that the hangmen of the Inquisition lay in wait to spy on them and to hand them over to torture and death. Yet, those Marranos did not complain that the Jewish law had become burdensome. I could refer to men like Moses Montefiore, the illustrious great uncle of the present "Liberal Jew," who, in spite of his prominent social position and the many temptations to which he was subjected, still remained a faithful Jew, who loved his religion with all the passion of his great soul.

If you ask, what was the source from which they drew such unfailing moral courage, such true piety and national enthusiasm? I answer: This Book of Moses, these orations of our prophets, the Psalms and the Prayer-book, the same which the liberal Jews reject. To them the flute of their religion was never too loud, its melody awakened in their souls tender feelings, sweet longings and reviving hopes. Every fibre of their being re-echoed the melody of old. To our modern brethren the tones of the flute are never soft enough. As long

as the flute is not altogether mute they are dissatisfied. No, friends, religion must be lived in order to be understood and appreciated. Its doctrines must become part of our moral and spiritual self, by practice, study and home influence, in order to be fully enjoyed. The lack of these necessary conditions explains the whole distressing position of our present Jewish communities.

I therefore address you in the words which occur in to-day's portion of the Torah: "Go and serve the Lord, as ye have spoken," let your service be no mere lip-service, let your religious feelings be manifested in your daily life, in the education of your children, in your love of God and of your people, and you will find the Law, the religious observances less burdensome, and less disturbing to the harmony of your thoughts or of your home life. Your religion will then be to you as it was to our ancestors, a source of happiness and heavenly joy.



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